

# The Underrepresentation of African Americans in Army Combat Arms Branches

A Monograph

by

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## **Abstract**

The Underrepresentation of African Americans in Army Combat Arms Branches by MAJ Marlon A. Thomas, 53 pages.

African American officers do not make it to the rank of general officer at a rate that is proportionate with the African American general population, creating a potential atmosphere of division between the American society and its military. Traditionally, the Army draws its preponderance of general officers from the combat arms branches. Disproportionate numbers of African Americans are not qualifying for combat arms branches or are choosing combat support and combat service support instead. This monograph analyzes this issue by examining the branch selection process at the various commissioning sources and highlights several short and long-term policy adjustments to address the shortfall.

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## **Acronyms**

ADRP	Army Doctrine Reference Publication
GOMO	General Officer Management Office
HBCU	Historically Black Colleges and Universities
HRC	Human Resources Command
OCS	Officer Candidate School
ROTC	Reserve Officers' Training Corps
USMA	US Military Academy



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## Introduction

Throughout United States history, the Army has played a crucial role in serving both as a microcosm of larger society, and as a catalyst for change in societal norms. In the nineteenth century, the Army integrated African American soldiers into its ranks long before the whole of society had even accepted these individuals as more than three-fifths of a person.<sup>1</sup> In the twentieth century, women integrated into the military and now serve in important capacities once denied to them. More recently, with the repeal of “don’t ask, don’t tell,” homosexuals have full military accord while the majority of states do not allow them to marry.<sup>2</sup> The armed citizen, the core of any military, serves as a direct reflection of society.<sup>3</sup> As a result of its willingness to accept the populace of its nation into its ranks and ensure equality for those individuals, the Army has brought important social changes to the forefront of society that may not have occurred or taken longer to occur.

Samuel Huntington, a noted scholar of civil-military relations in the United States, posits that it is of paramount importance that the Army’s officer corps reflect the society it is charged to defend while remaining an exemplification of that society.<sup>4</sup> There are indications, however, that the Army is failing in its role as a microcosm and catalyst for progressive change of society. According to the US Census data from 1990-2010, African Americans account for approximately

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<sup>1</sup> *The Constitution of the United States with index and the Declaration of Independence*, 2nd ed. (Malta, ID: National Center for Constitutional Studies, 2010), 1.

<sup>2</sup> “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell,” US Army, accessed 12 July 2014, <http://www.army.mil/dadt/>.

<sup>3</sup> Richard W. Stewart, *American Military History* (Washington, DC: Center of Military History, US Army, 2005), 1.

<sup>4</sup> Samuel P. Huntington, *The Soldier and the State: The Theory and Politics of Civil-Military Relations*, (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 1957), 86.

twelve percent of the US population.<sup>5</sup> At first glance, the data indicates that the Army is doing an adequate job ensuring equal representation within its officer ranks as African Americans account for almost exactly a representative share of 12.1 percent of the officers commissioned between 1990 and 2010.<sup>6</sup> However, a more in-depth review of the same data also reveals that African Americans are currently underrepresented in the US Army's combat arms branches with just 4.3 percent of African American officers commissioned in those branches since 1990.<sup>7</sup> Because the Army draws its highest levels of leadership from the combat arms branches, it is significant that African American officers are commissioning into non-combat arms roles at a rate of almost two to one.<sup>8</sup> As a consequence, African American officers, due to reduced representation in the combat arms, are underrepresented in the senior general officer ranks of the US Army.

Since 1988, only seven (nine percent) of seventy-seven US Army four-star generals were African American. Of those, five (seventy-one percent) were combat arms and two were support branches. The two African American support branch officers made up half of the total four support four-star general officers since 1988. Given that they make up the majority of the population, Caucasian combat arms officers serve as the face of the US Army. To make the face of the Army more representative, it is critical that the Army's general officer ranks continue to reflect the demographics of the force as well as society as a whole. The Army's propensity to

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<sup>5</sup> Central Intelligence Agency, "North America: United States," *The World Factbook*, 20 June 2014, accessed 1 July 2014, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/us.html>.

<sup>6</sup> Defense Manpower Data Center, accessed 31 July 2014, <https://www.dmdc.osd.mil/appj/dwp/index.jsp>, 2.

<sup>7</sup> Defense Manpower Data Center, accessed 31 May 2014, <https://www.dmdc.osd.mil/appj/dwp/index.jsp>.

<sup>8</sup> Nelson Lim, Jefferson P. Marquis, and Kimberly C. Hall, *Officer Classification and the Future of Diversity among Senior Military Leaders* (RAND Cooperation, 2009), 4.

draw from the combat arms branches for its senior leaders combined with the evidence of dramatic underrepresentation of African American officers in those branches is an indication of a serious problem. These statistics, while the sample sizes are small, provide an early indication that the Army falls short of commissioning a sufficient numbers of African American officers into combat arms.

A review of the current general officer data from General Officer Management Office (GOMO), referenced in Table 1 below, indicates that not only are African Americans underrepresented at the four-star general level, but also in the overall general officer population.<sup>9</sup> As with four-star generals, African Americans make up 9.6 percent of the Army's general officer population.<sup>10</sup> Table 1 also shows that of the thirty-nine African American general officers, only thirty-one percent are combat arms. This is in contrast to the three hundred and forty-four white general officers, of which sixty percent are combat arms. Furthermore, African Americans make up only five percent of the combat arms general officer population while making up fifteen percent of the support branch general officer population. These statistics show a significant underrepresentation of African American combat arms general officers, which in turn leads to difficulties for African Americans to serve proportionately in the senior ranks of the Army. This underrepresentation is self-perpetuating; with less African American combat arms generals in senior positions, the less appealing an Army career path will appear, and thus recruiting will become more challenging.

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<sup>9</sup> General Officer Management Office, accessed 26 September 2014, <https://www.us.army.mil/suite/portal/index.jsp>.

<sup>10</sup> General Officer Management Office, accessed 24 September 2014, <https://www.us.army.mil/suite/portal/index.jsp>.

Branches	White	African American	Other	Total
Air Defense	9	0	1	10
Armor	30	1	2	33
Aviation	22	1	1	24
Engineer	24	2	2	28
Field Artillery	22	1	0	23
Infantry	78	7	6	91
Special Forces	22	0	2	24
Support Branches	137	27	11	175
Total	344	39	25	408

Table 1. General Officers Comparison by Demography and Branch

*Source:* General Officer Management Office, accessed 24 September 2014, <https://www.gomo.army.mil/Ext/Portal/Officer/Resumes.aspx>.

## Methodology

The purpose of this monograph is to answer the following questions: why is the underrepresentation of African Americans in the US Army important? What are the potential primary and secondary causes of this shortfall? This is a very complex issue and due to space considerations, this research will only highlight issues that can serve as a starting point for the Army to determine true causality. This monograph is simply reviewing data and identifying correlation, and based on correlation, assigning causality based on historical information and scholarly literature. These potential causes are not fact, and provide a starting point that, at the very least, would allow the Army to identify what is not responsible for the causes of the underrepresentation.

To answer the first question, this monograph will provide a link between African American military progress and United States societal progress via a review of African American military history. To answer the second question, a review of the history of the commissioning sources is necessary for interpreting the results of the data analysis. Then, an in-depth analysis of commissioning and branch selection statistics from each commissioning source will help shed light on the source of the shortage of African American combat arms officers. The statistics for

this research were provided by the Office of Economic Manpower and Analysis and supplemented with additional data from the Defense Manpower Data Center. For the purpose of this monograph, the year 1988 is the starting point for the commissioning statistics. Subject matter experts hypothesized that the number African American officers commissioned into combat arms decreased as a result of the widespread closures of Army Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) programs between 1987 and 1995.<sup>11</sup> This hypothesis is based upon how these closures disproportionately affected historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs) as well as programs in urban areas that served the predominantly minority student populations.<sup>12</sup>

Prior to a review of the history of the commissioning sources, a review of the history of African Americans in the Army is necessary. Understanding the history of African Americans in the Army helps illustrate the important correlation between military and societal progress.

### **African Americans in the United States Army**

Since the US Army's birth in 1775, the military service of African Americans has been steadfast. During the American Revolution, the First Rhode Island Regiment successes and sacrifices helped demonstrate the capabilities of African Americans in the military during the fight for America's independence.<sup>13</sup> Later, the Tuskegee Airmen were among the war's most decorated soldiers during WWII. More recently, General Colin Powell, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, was the senior American in uniform as the US liberated Kuwait from Iraq during

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<sup>11</sup> General Jack Keane (retired), "Transforming Army ROTC," *American Enterprise Institute*, accessed 6 October 2014, <http://www.aei.org/events/2014/02/11/transforming-army-rotc-a-conversation-between-major-general-jefforey-a-smith-and-general-jack-keane-ret/>.

<sup>12</sup> Gregg Jaffe, "A Retreat from Big Cities Hurts ROTC Recruiting," *Wall Street Journal*, 22 February 2007, accessed 26 February 2014, <http://online.wsj.com/news/articles/SB117211467400115746>.

<sup>13</sup> Alexander M. Bielakowski, *Ethnic and Racial Minorities in the US Military: An Encyclopedia* (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2013), 218.

the Gulf War.<sup>14</sup> More importantly, as African Americans progress militarily, African Americans progress civilly. This link is incredibly important as it relates to the underrepresentation of African American combat arms officers. History shows that the US military influences American society by its influx of military officers into governmental positions, relationships between military leaders and business leadership, and admiration of individual military figures.<sup>15</sup>

The American War for Independence was the first example of military and societal progress for African Americans going hand in hand. That war provided the first opportunity for African Americans to serve honorably and be deemed more than property. Because of gallantly serving units like the First Rhode Island Regiment, which consisted of more than half of African Americans, African Americans were able to characterize themselves as equals for the first time.<sup>16</sup> For the first time, large numbers of African Americans were given freedom in exchange for their service in the Continental Army. While these were substantial milestones, African American service roles were limited to lower enlisted ranks only, thus limiting any significant leadership contributions. These events, however, laid the groundwork for notable progress in successive US wars.

The Civil War was one of the most critical periods for African Americans. On 1 January 1863, President Abraham Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation, which freed the slaves in the rebelling Confederate states and allowed African Americans to fight for the Union. Units such as the 54th Massachusetts Voluntary Infantry, an African American regiment, built upon the

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<sup>14</sup> Catherine Reef, *African Americans in the Military* (New York, NY: Facts On File, 2004), 16; Department of Defense, *Directive Number 5100.01*, on page 14, defines Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff as the principal military advisor to the President, the National Security Council, the Homeland Security Council, and the Secretary of Defense.

<sup>15</sup> Huntington, 354.

<sup>16</sup> Bielakowski, 218.



successes of the Revolutionary War.<sup>17</sup> In 1863, the 54th led the charge on a heavily fortified Confederate installation, considered one of the toughest beachhead defenses constructed.<sup>18</sup> Although a defeat for the 54th Massachusetts Voluntary Infantry, it again demonstrated to a larger audience that African Americans could serve courageously in combat roles. William Carney became the first African American awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor, which had a major impact on societal perception.<sup>19</sup> This all but debunked the notion that African Americans could not fight as well as whites, and helped further promote racial equality in the United States. The signing of the Emancipation Proclamation created a legal framework for ending slavery and provided the opportunity for African Americans to fight for the Union, which had massive impacts throughout society.

While the societal progress witnessed through African Americans' participation in the US Army cannot be understated, changes in the military following the Civil War were perhaps just as important. Henry O. Flipper became the first African American to graduate from the US Military Academy (USMA) in 1877.<sup>20</sup> This was the first time African Americans served as commissioned officers in the Army. Unfortunately, it would take another sixty years before African American officers served prominently.

During World War I, there was a slight lull in the military and societal progress for African Americans. While over thirteen hundred African American officers were commissioned, the majority served in non-combat roles, and most were commissioned because of heavy pressure by the press and civil rights groups such as the National Association for the Advancement of

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<sup>17</sup> Bielakowski, 203.

<sup>18</sup> Reef, ix.

<sup>19</sup> Reef, 50.

<sup>20</sup> Stephen E. Ambrose, *Duty, Honor, Country: A History of West Point* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins Press, 1966), 232.

Colored People (NAACP). Of particular note, for the first time HBCUs played a major role in the commissioning of African American officers, establishing camps specifically for African Americans. While many African Americans served honorably in World War I, the two primarily African American divisions served in France under French leadership and as a result, their efforts did not resonate within American society to the same extent as previous war successes. The 92nd and 93rd Infantry Divisions were made up of mostly African Americans enlisted soldiers and junior officers, but were led by Caucasian senior officers. Both divisions had numerous successes on the battlefield where units and individual soldiers received copious awards for bravery from the French Army. Nevertheless, after World War I ended, the divisions unfairly earned a reputation of being ineffective despite abundant successes on the battlefield.<sup>21</sup> The majority of the soldiers returned to a segregated America, which did not appreciate their service to the war effort.<sup>22</sup> Racial tensions back home increased, and many African Americans returned home from the war seeing little increased racial equality. World War I's parallels to today are significant as they represent a time in history where the stall of African American military progress also saw a stall in African American societal progress. This is important to keep in mind when considering why the current situation is important to the US Army as it serves as a prime example of non-progress and its impacts.

#### African Americans during World War II

US sentiment prior to World War II mirrored the sentiment prior to World War I with the majority of Americans wanting to abstain. However, because of Pearl Harbor, military mobilization in the United States rose to a scale not seen before or since. For the first time, African Americans were provided the opportunity to serve in the same military capacity as white

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<sup>21</sup> Bielakowski, 458.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 468.

Americans. World War II was the beginning of the modern military commissioned officer experience for African Americans. Large numbers were commissioned through Officer Candidate School (OCS) and ROTC programs. The opportunity to serve in the same capacity as white officers formed the building block of integration of African American officers into combat arms roles. In fact, over fifteen hundred Tuskegee Airmen served, won multiple valorous awards, and played pivotal roles in key strategic victories.<sup>23</sup> Militarily, this was significant because African American combat arms officers, for the first time, succeeded in the same roles as white combat arms officers. The perception of African Americans' inability to serve in consequential roles in combat was put to rest. Unfortunately, soon after the war, many African American officers left the military, and the momentum gained in combat arms roles stalled.

Their departure not only impacted the African American officers' momentum, but also impacted the United States as these officers returned to face discrimination and racial tensions. Fully qualified African Americans were denied jobs because of their race, which resulted in mediocre employment and many African American veterans faced harassment and violence on a regular basis. One infamous act of violence was the beating of a World War II veteran, Sergeant Isaac Woodard, which resulted in him losing both eyes. This specific act of violence against a Veteran became the catalyst for major civil rights reform by President Harry S. Truman, who was familiar with the valorous service by African Americans during World War II.<sup>24</sup>

#### To Secure These Rights

African Americans saw significant changes, both militarily and societally, during and following World War II, which marked the beginning of the Civil Rights Movement in the United

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<sup>23</sup> Barry M. Stentiford, *Tuskegee Airmen* (Santa Barbara, CA: Greenwood, 2012), 131.

<sup>24</sup> Aaron Kramer and Cary Nelson, *Wicked Times: Selected Poems* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2004), 322.

States. Perhaps unexpectedly, US foreign policy actually instigated a major turning point in the Civil Rights Movement. The United States used the momentum gained from its success in the World War II for a larger cause just as African American communities did in the years following the war.<sup>25</sup> The United States' response to being thrust into a global leadership role, as one of two hegemony, was to employ a strategy of containment. In its implementation, this strategy made the United States the global champion for democracy as a means to prevent the spread of communism throughout the world.<sup>26</sup> Although its containment policy gained some traction throughout the world, friends and foes alike made it clear that the racial inequality still very visible in America had to be addressed in order for the United States to be an effective world leader.

President Truman initiated the President's Committee on Civil Rights in response to international feedback, his deep disturbance with the violence against African American veterans returning from WWII, and pressure from civil rights activists and other agencies.<sup>27</sup> The President's Committee generated the report, *To Secure These Rights*, which called for permanent changes to address civil rights issues.<sup>28</sup> *To Secure These Rights* resulted in President Truman

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<sup>25</sup> Karen Hodges, "Continuity or Change: African Americans in World War II," Academy for College & Career Exploration, Baltimore City, 24 September 2014, [http://www.umbc.edu/che/tahlessons/pdf/Continuity\\_or\\_Change\\_African\\_Americans\\_in\\_World\\_War\\_II\(PrinterFriendly\).pdf](http://www.umbc.edu/che/tahlessons/pdf/Continuity_or_Change_African_Americans_in_World_War_II(PrinterFriendly).pdf).

<sup>26</sup> Akis Kalaitzidis and Gregory W. Streich, *US Foreign Policy a Documentary and Reference Guide* (Santa Barbara, CA: Greenwood, 2011), 131.

<sup>27</sup> "To Secure These Rights," Truman S. Library and Museum, 5 December 1946, accessed 19 February 2014, <http://www.trumanlibrary.org/civilrights/srights1.htm>, VIII.

<sup>28</sup> Christopher M. Richardson and Ralph Luker, *Historical Dictionary of the Civil Rights Movement*, Second ed (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2014), 167. Some of the changes included the federal government ending segregation in America, lynching became a federal offense, end of discrimination in the armed forces, and voting rights were introduced for African Americans, which guaranteed their right to vote in elections, free from threats of violence.

issuing Executive Order 9981: Desegregation of the Armed Forces, and Executive Order 9980: Regulations Governing Fair Employment Practices within the Federal Establishment on 26 July 1948.<sup>29</sup> African Americans were now full-fledged American citizens with similar rights as their white counterparts.

This societal progress resulted in a major military turning point for African American officers in the US Army. Prior to the signing of Executive Orders 9980 and 9981 by President Truman, there had only been one African American to reach the rank of general: Brigadier General Benjamin O. Davis Sr., who earned the prestigious rank in October 1940.<sup>30</sup> Just six short years after the signing of those orders by President Truman, Colonel Benjamin O. Davis Jr. became the second African American to earn the rank of general.<sup>31</sup> In the twenty years following those executive orders, there were five African American general officers.<sup>32</sup> Clearly, President Truman's actions were extremely beneficial and helped African Americans reach the rank of four-star general officer. However, a review of the data revealed that in the sixty-seven years since the desegregation of the Armed Forces, there have still only been fourteen African American division commanders and only eight four-star generals in the US Army.<sup>33</sup> This suggests that while African American officers can reach the highest levels of the military, there may be something preventing them from reaching the highest levels consistently.

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<sup>29</sup> Richardson and Luker, 167.

<sup>30</sup> Reef, 69.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 67.

<sup>32</sup> General Officer Management Office, accessed 26 February 2014, <https://www.us.army.mil/suite/portal/index.jsp>.

<sup>33</sup> General Officer Management Office, active and retired generals.

## Contemporary Issues

Statistics indicate that African American progress in today's military is stalling. The histories of African American military and societal progress have consistently been relatively equal; military progress drives societal progress and societal progress drives military progress. In 2008, the United States elected its first African American President, which marked the most substantial societal change for African Americans. However, the number of African American officers in combat arms branches has been in decline since 1988. Given that combat arms officers consistently reach the highest ranks in the Army, this is statistically and socially significant. While the glass ceiling for African Americans appears to have been shattered for society as a whole, the fact that only eight of more than two hundred officers that have been promoted to a four-star general since 1948 were African Americans, only been one African American Vice Chief of Staff, and there has yet to be an African American Chief of Staff of the Army all suggest that the glass ceiling still exists in the Army.<sup>34</sup>

While general officer representation highlights the issue of the lack of African American visibility, the problem is much deeper, stemming from the lack of African Americans officers serving in combat arms branches. Since 1988, the number of African American combat arms officers has decreased from 10.9 percent to 6.5 percent (see Figure 1). Only twice during this period has the percentage of African American officers commissioned into the combat arms branches been equal to or greater than the percentage of the US African American population. Furthermore, the percentage of African American officers in combat arms branches exceeded the percentage of African Americans in non-combat arms branches only once in 1995. Interestingly, in terms of the percentage of total number of officers, the number of African American officers has increased from 13.2 percent to 16.9 percent (see Figure 1). This points directly to the fact that

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<sup>34</sup> General Officer Management Office, active and retired generals.

African Americans are less likely to branch-select into combat arms upon receiving a commission.

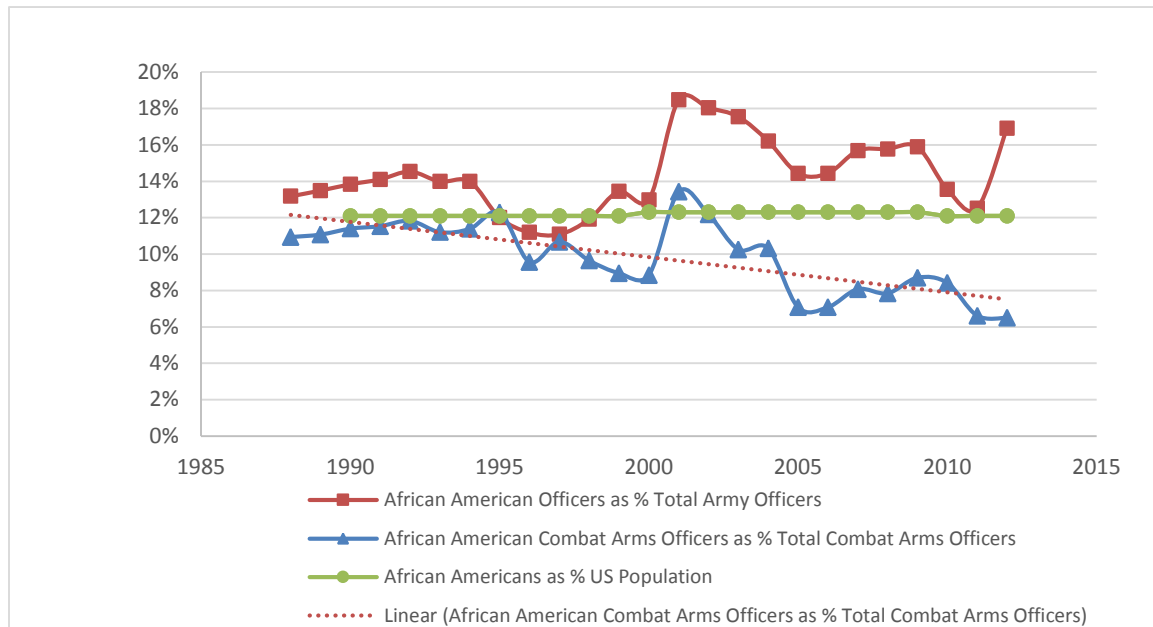


Figure 1. African American Officers vs. African American Combat Arms Officers

The year 1988 serves as a starting point of this analysis because ROTC programs in the urban areas of the Northeast states started closing down. According to Cheryl Miller, a noted researcher in closures of ROTC programs in New York City, over seventy programs closed in Northeast states during and shortly after 1988.<sup>35</sup> Despite these closures however, as Figure 2 below shows, the number of African American officers as a percentage of the total officer population has remained incredibly stable, and closely resembles the African American population percentage. In order to better understand the underrepresentation of African

<sup>35</sup> Cheryl Miller, “Underserved: A Case Study of ROTC in New York City,” American Enterprise Institute, May 2011, accessed 14 August 2014, <http://www.citizenship-aei.org>, 23.

Americans in the combat arms branches, then, this research takes a closer look at the various commissioning sources and their branch selection processes and statistics.

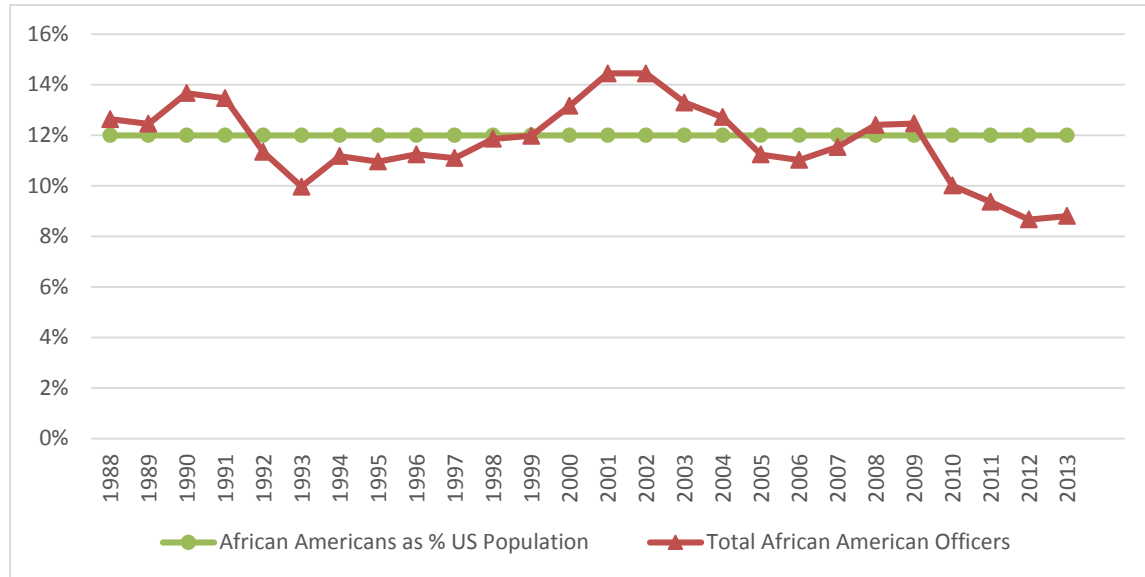


Figure 2. African American Officers as Percentage of Total Officers

Comparison of total African Americans Officers and African American in US Population from 1988 to 2013 as a percentage of total Army officers.

### Paths to Becoming an Officer

There are four avenues to receiving a commission as an officer in the United States Army. In each commissioning method, an officer receives a commission under the authority of the President of the United States or the Secretary of the Army to hold their grade and office. The premise of this commission is trust and confidence in the officer's loyalty and experience in leading and influencing subordinates while obeying superiors. Officers are crucial to the Army's organization of building systems, commanding units, managing resources while caring for its



people and families.<sup>36</sup> Officers are leaders of soldiers, from a small unit of soldiers to the Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff responsible for the entire US Military.<sup>37</sup> Officers take charge of their actions and decisions, holding those around them accountable. Each path to officership, whether it is the USMA, Army ROTC, OCS, or a Direct Commission, requires commitment and dedication in service to one's nation.

Although each commissioning source expects its candidates to uphold the tenants of Army leadership, all of the aforementioned sources of commission have distinct methods of recruiting and assessing potential candidates, including academic performance, physical abilities, and community service. An in-depth review of each commissioning source, and especially the branch selection process, is necessary in order to determine what changes can effectively increase the number of African American combat arms officers.

For the purposes of this monograph, only the statistics for USMA, ROTC, and OCS are used. The majority of officers that direct commission are professionals such as chaplains, doctors and lawyers, and account for the smallest number of Army commissions. Changes to its population would require significant alterations outside the reach of the Army, and would not affect combat arms branches.

#### Officer Candidate School

Because of an increase in manning requirements during World War II, which USMA and ROTC alone were unable to meet, the War Department set out to establish OCS. OCS is a result of General George Marshall's 1940 vision to provide rigorous, realistic training for newly

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<sup>36</sup> Department of the Army Headquarters, *Army Doctrine Reference Publication 6-22, Army Leadership* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2012), 2-1.

<sup>37</sup> The term, *soldiers*, denotes officers, noncommissioned officers (NCOs), and enlisted men and women in the US Army.

commissioned officers in preparation for deployment to combat. In 1941, Brigadier General Asa L. Singleton took General Marshall's vision for Infantry, Field Artillery, and Coastal Artillery officers and created a system of training that is today's OCS.<sup>38</sup>

Located at Fort Benning, Georgia, OCS is open to enlisted service members and civilians with specific qualifications that include a minimum of a four-year college degree and eligibility for a secret security clearance. As the only active duty Officer Candidate School, this fourteen-week program commissions over fifteen-hundred lieutenants annually in all sixteen basic branches of the Army.<sup>39</sup> Upon completion of the program, graduates must serve a minimum of three-years on active duty. Similar to USMA and ROTC, an order of merit list based on academic performance, physical fitness, and leader attributes rank all the candidates. These lists, along with Human Resources Command's (HRC) manning requirements for the Army, determine the branches assigned to graduates of the program.<sup>40</sup>

A review of the OCS data in Figure 3 shows that OCS commissions African American officers at a rate representative of the overall African American population. Since 1998, OCS has consistently commissioned more than twelve percent African American officers. This should not come as much surprise, however, as the Army can easily control the candidates it selects to enter OCS. The data indicates that as the percentage of African American officers increases, so does the number of African American combat arms officers. Furthermore, OCS is doing an adequate

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<sup>38</sup> "Officer Candidate School," US Army Maneuver Center of Excellence, accessed 18 July 2014, <http://www.benning.army.mil/infantry/199th/ocs/>.

<sup>39</sup> "History of Officer Candidate School," US Army Maneuver Center of Excellence, accessed 18 July 2014, <http://www.benning.army.mil/infantry/199th/ocs/content/pdf/OCS%20History.pdf>.

<sup>40</sup> "OPMD ORD Active Component Operations Branch Landing Page," US Army Human Resources Command, accessed 4 October 2014, <https://www.hrc.army.mil/Officer/OPMD%20ORD%20Active%20Component%20Operations%20Branch>. HRC manning requirement is a prioritized, equitable distribution of Officers to positions commensurate with their capacity, and that Army essential requirements are met.

job of ensuring that the African American officers commission into combat arms branches. At ten percent, OCS currently sees the highest African American combat arms branch commissioning. The most important thing to note, however, is that OCS is seeing the largest disparity between African American officers and African American combat arms officers, at approximately ten percent. This suggests that while OCS is doing an adequate job of ensuring African Americans branch-select into combat arms, it is likely as a direct result of the fact that OCS possess the largest African American population of the commissioning sources and is not without its own issues.

As OCS is the second largest commissioning source responsible for producing almost fifty percent of the African American officer population, closing the gap would cause a significant increase in African American combat arms officers. OCS is not seeing significant decreases in the number of African Americans commissioning, as the Army controls this. A study of the branch preferences among African American officers would likely produce actionable information. Unfortunately, this data is not available at the time of publication, and thus only assumptions based on further data review of the remaining commissioning sources can be made.

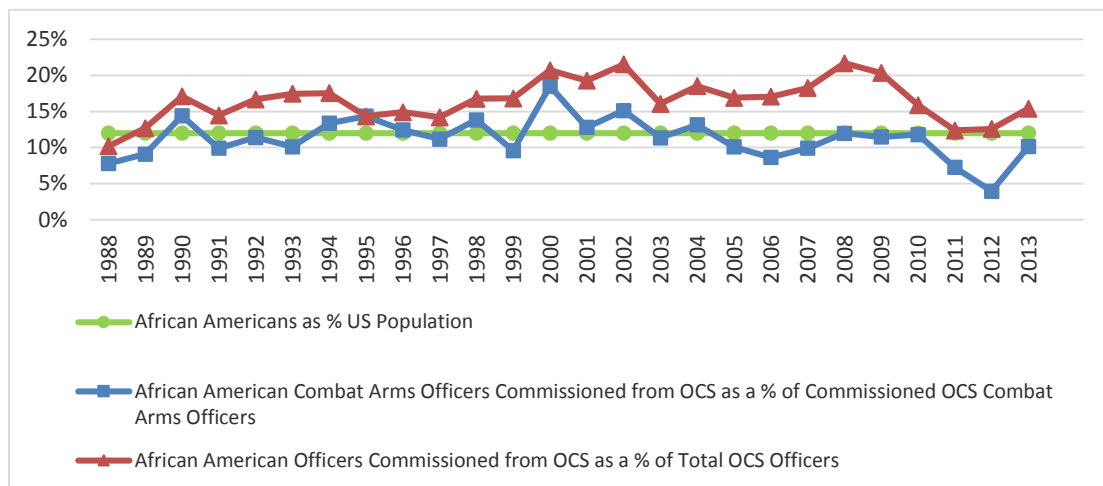


Figure 3. OCS Comparisons

## US Military Academy (USMA) at West Point

USMA, also known as West Point, was established 1802 in New York overlooking the Hudson River. West Point is the cradle that cultivated the vast majority of America's senior military leaders, in addition to numerous famous civilian leaders.<sup>41</sup> From its rich history to its rigorous academics, West Point's commitment to the values of Duty, Honor, Country remain steadfast in producing future leaders in the US Army.<sup>42</sup> During his presidency, George Washington's aspiration was to create a military institution in which Americans could properly train in military science without the added nuances of European ideologies. George Washington's interaction with and dependence upon European engineers exposed him to their ideas of governance and artificial habits that were offensive to his American principles.<sup>43</sup> He felt military instruction to be a primary necessity for the newly established United States of America, and wanted to ensure that, like the Constitution, the principles on which it was founded would remain hundreds of years later.

On 16 March 1802, President Thomas Jefferson signed the Military Peace Establishment Act of 1802, and formalized the creation of the US Military Academy.<sup>44</sup> George Washington's dream was now a reality. George Washington, however, was not the only prominent figure in West Point's rise to fame. Although he may be the founder, the title of "The Father of West Point," belongs to Sylvanus Thayer. In 1807, Thayer was appointed as a cadet at West Point, and

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<sup>41</sup> Theodore J. Crackel, *West Point: a Bicentennial History* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2002), 2.

<sup>42</sup> US Military Academy, accessed 19 July 2014, <http://www.usma.edu/SitePages/Home.aspx>.

<sup>43</sup> Henry Barnard, *Military Schools and Courses of Instruction in the Science and Art of War, in France, Prussia, Austria, Russia, Sweden, Switzerland, Sardinia, England, and the United States* (Rev. ed. New York: Greenwood Press, 1969), 721.

<sup>44</sup> Crackel, 55.

graduated in one year with a commission as a second lieutenant in the Corps of Engineers. During the War of 1812, Thayer planned and supervised the coastal fortification of Norfolk, Virginia, which the British were unable to capture.<sup>45</sup> For his actions, Thayer received the temporary rank of Major. President James Madison ordered him back to West Point to become its fifth superintendent in 1816, which became official in 1817.<sup>46</sup> Drawing upon his experiences as a cadet at West Point and leading junior officers in the War of 1812, Thayer was convinced that many officers lacked the discipline, education, and understanding of military science necessary to become successful officers. To address these deficiencies, Thayer set forth systems and practices to include a new course of studies, disciplinary measures, and admission practices that are still present and in effect today.<sup>47</sup>

Arguably, the most significant changes made by Thayer were his restrictions to the admissions process that admitted candidates to the Academy once a year rather than multiple times during the year.<sup>48</sup> As a result, West Point was no longer a school for the privileged with relaxed admissions, but instead, an institution based on merits and talents. Performance was the priority, and cadets who did not meet the course expectations or breached protocols were promptly terminated from enrollment.<sup>49</sup> Nearly two hundred years later, admission to West Point remains the same—acceptance is centered on exceptional grades, exemplary physical fitness, and steadfast character. Over fifteen thousand applicants apply each year from all different walks of

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<sup>45</sup> Nardi R. Campion, “Who Was Sylvanus Thayer?” *Dartmouth Engineer Magazine*, Fall 2004, 17.

<sup>46</sup> Ambrose, 67.

<sup>47</sup> Ambrose, 63.

<sup>48</sup> Crackel, 82.

<sup>49</sup> Nardi R. Campion, “Who Was Sylvanus Thayer?” *Dartmouth Engineer Magazine*, Fall 2004, 15.

life with typically less than a ten percent acceptance rate.<sup>50</sup> Along with a demanding workload, cadets must also abide by the honor code that states that a cadet will not lie, cheat, steal, or tolerate those who do. A failure to meet the demanding workload or a violation of the honor code can lead to dismissal.

For all its history, tradition, and success, a review of West Point's commissioning practices with respect to African Americans is overdue. West Point cadets select their branches in the same manner they have for the past two hundred years. While branch selection is partially merit based throughout all the commissioning sources, at West Point, it is based on solely class ranking. As an institution considered by many to be the premier leadership institution in the world, West Point has a responsibility to ensure its procedures are best in synch with the desires of the public.

Out of the twelve currently serving active duty, four-star generals, ten are graduates of West Point.<sup>51</sup> However, of the eight African American who have held four-star rank, only four have been USMA graduates. Although the sample size is small, this suggests there might be an incongruity in the branch selection process at West Point. As all eight African American four-star generals have been combat arms, this data suggests that a disproportionate number of African American cadets are either ineligible for combat arms branches or are choosing combat support and combat service support.<sup>52</sup> Based on the above information, the hypothesis is that West Point

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<sup>50</sup> US Military Academy, accessed 19 July 2014, <http://www.usma.edu/SitePages/Home.aspx>.

<sup>51</sup> General Officer Management Office, accessed 19 July 2014, <https://www.us.army.mil/suite/portal/index.jsp>.

<sup>52</sup> Department of the Army, *Field Manual 3-90, Tactics* on page A-27 define combat support as critical combat functions provided by units and Soldiers, in conjunction with combat arms units and Soldiers, to secure victory. Those functions include Army Aviation, Chemical Corps, Engineers, Military Intelligence, Military Police Corps, Signal Corps, and Special Operations Forces (CA and PSYOP units). While combat service support is to sustain Army forces.

will have an incredibly large disparity between African American officers and African American combat arms officers.

However, a review of the data in Figure 4 below shows that West Point has essentially no disparity, as the percentage of African American officers is consistently within one or two percent of African American combat arms officers. This suggests that the problem West Point faces is a problem with recruiting, not a problem with its branch selection process. This is surprising as West Point admissions has a diversity outreach program solely responsible for ensuring that minorities applying and are accepted to West Point. The data shows that West Point is currently commissioning African American combat arms and support officers at approximately the same rate of five to seven percent. This means that West Point is commissioning African American officers at a rate approximately five percent below the national average. This piece of information is incredibly significant as it indicates that though the Army as a whole is seeing twelve percent African American officers, there is an underlying issue of African American officer recruitment. If the premier leadership institute in the world with a diversity outreach program cannot ensure a representative population, then the Army is facing a much larger problem with perception of its image. West Point and OCS statistics indicate the Army may be facing a perception issue with both African American officers and African American combat arms officers. Furthermore, it is possible that these issues will have gone unnoticed because, as Figure 1 shows, the Army is commissioning a representative African American officer population.

Fortunately for West Point, it is actually the smallest commissioning source, so the five percent disparity between African American US population and number of African American combat arms is not statistically significant in terms of impact on the overall numbers of African American officers. Unlike OCS, closing the gap will not provide a large increase in African American combat arms officers because West Point is only responsible for ten percent of all African American officers in the Army. However, this data does provide an important insight.

The West Point data provides an indication that the Army actually has a problem with recruiting African American officers from the general population.

Thus far, the data has shown that between the two commissioning sources, OCS has a larger disparity of African American officers commissioning combat arms branches versus support branches, suggesting that African Americans perceive combat arms branches less favorably. Separately, West Point has a disparity between the general population of African Americans and the number of African American officers commissioning, suggesting an issue with African American recruitment from the general population. A review of ROTC will paint a picture of the larger problem the Army faces concerning commissioning African American combat arms officers.

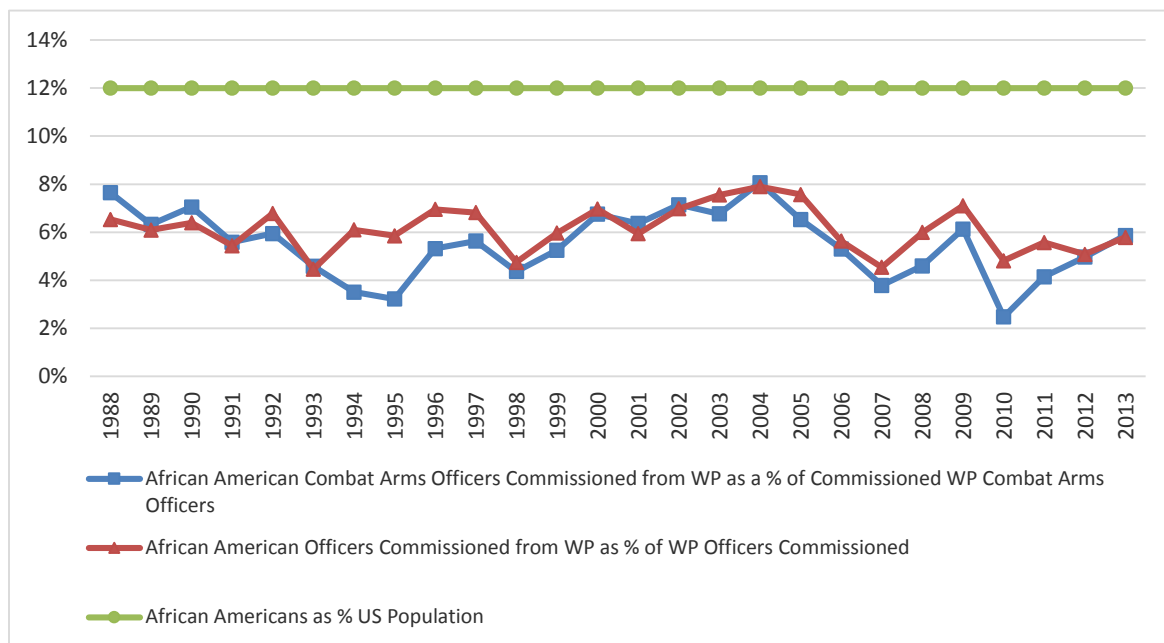


Figure 4. West Point Comparisons



## Army Reserve Officers' Training Corps

President Woodrow Wilson established the Army Reserve Officers' Training Corps with the ROTC Bill as a part of the National Defense Act of 1916.<sup>53</sup> The idea for Army ROTC originated a century before, however, in an effort spearheaded by Captain Alden Partridge, former Superintendent of West Point.<sup>54</sup> In 1819, Captain Partridge founded the American Literary, Scientific and Military Academy in Norwich, Vermont, an institution that provided students the opportunity to pursue military or non-military careers in a military environment without a severed connection with society at large.<sup>55</sup> Modern day Army ROTC programs retain much of Captain Partridge's original philosophies and, most importantly, the link between the cadets and the community.<sup>56</sup>

More recently, the Army ROTC's focus shifted from the production of reserve officers to generating professional, career officers to serve in either the Active Duty Army or Reserves.<sup>57</sup> In order to meet this goal, the US established Army Cadet Command, which currently oversees eight brigades consisting of two hundred and seventy-three ROTC programs at various civilian colleges and universities.<sup>58</sup> In addition, ROTC offers competitive two, three, and four-year scholarships as

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<sup>53</sup> Arthur T. Coumbe and Lee S. Harford, *US Army Cadet Command: The 10 Year History* (Fort Monroe, VA: Office of the Command Historian, US Army Cadet Command, 1996), 14.

<sup>54</sup> Coumbe and Harford, 7.

<sup>55</sup> Coumbe and Harford, 10. The name was later changed to Norwich University.

<sup>56</sup> US Army Cadet Command, accessed 20 July 2014, <http://www.cadetcommand.army.mil/>.

<sup>57</sup> Coumbe and Harford, 21.

<sup>58</sup> US Army Cadet Command, accessed 19 July 2014, <http://www.cadetcommand.army.mil/>.

well as stipends for those who are willing to commit to service in the active or reserve components upon completion of graduation and commission requirements.

The establishment of US Army Cadet Command in 1986 standardized ROTC programs throughout the country. Army Cadet Command is responsible for the recruiting, selection, education, and training of college students to become commissioned officers in the active or reserve components. Cadet Command is responsible for the branch assignment of all ROTC graduates, using a similar selection process to West Point with an order of merit list (academics, physical fitness test, and leader attributes), and a cadet preference sheet. However, slightly different from USMA, Cadet Command fills a specific number of branch allocations from the top half of the order of merit list, and a specific number from the bottom half of the order of merit list. As a result, Cadet Command maintains a greater flexibility in controlling the overall quality within a specific population of each branch.

The Army ROTC is the largest officer-producing program for the US Army, commissioning close to fifty percent of the new lieutenants produced annually.<sup>59</sup> Because of its large percentage of officer population production, the ROTC provides the most meaningful and statistically significant data for defining the potential cause of the underrepresentation of African Americans in the US Army combat arms branches. While it commissions the most officers, as Figure 5 shows, an analysis of ROTC programs at non-HBCU and ROTC programs at HBCU tells a compelling narrative.

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<sup>59</sup> US Army Cadet Command, accessed 19 July 2014, <http://www.cadetcommand.army.mil/>.

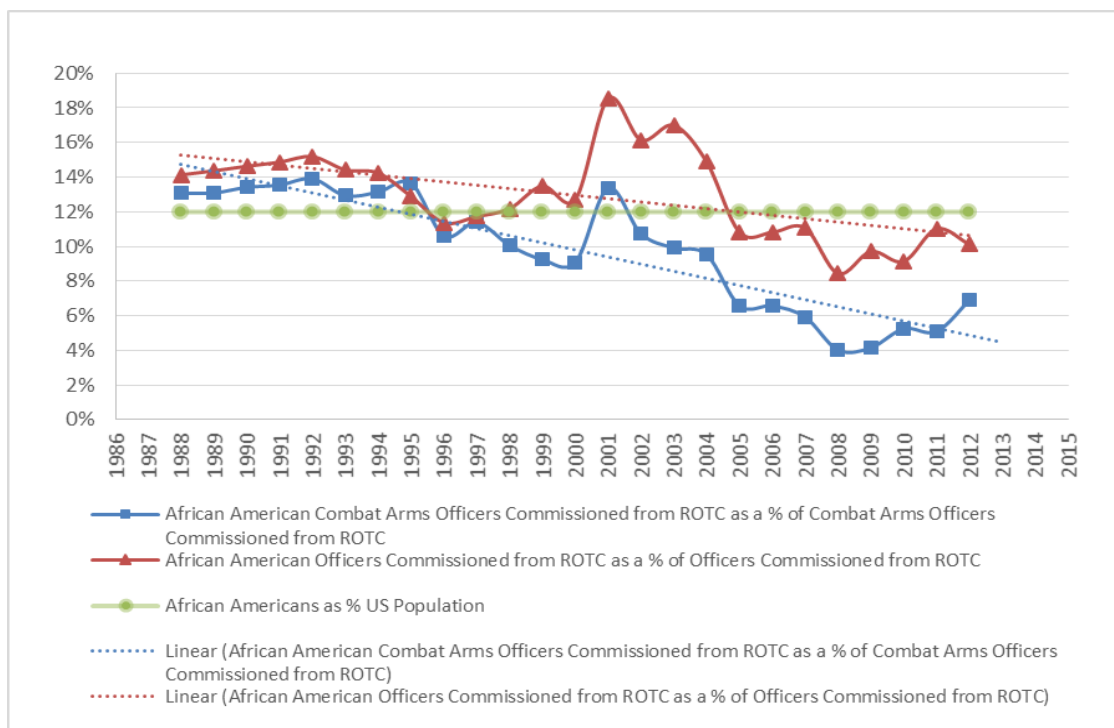


Figure 5. ROTC Comparisons

### ROTC Programs at non-Historically Black Colleges and Universities

ROTC programs at non-HBCUs currently commission the lowest percentage of African American officers and African American combat arms officers. As Figure 6 shows, only five and a half percent of ROTC graduates are African American. This is approximately six percent below the Army's production as a whole, and suggests that ROTC programs at non-HBCUs along with West Point may not be recruiting sufficient numbers of African Americans into the program. The data since 2000, again, shows almost a direct correlation between the number of African American officers and African American combat arms officers for ROTC programs at non-HBCUs along with West Point. Based on these two trends, it can be hypothesized that if the numbers of African American officers are increased, the number of African American combat arms officers will increase as well. More concerning, however, is the negative slope of both

African American officers and African American combat arms officers commissioning from ROTC at non-HBCUs since 1988. ROTC programs at HBCUs were broken down separate to examine ROTC programs in more detail, since HBCUs produce the preponderance of African American officers in the Army.

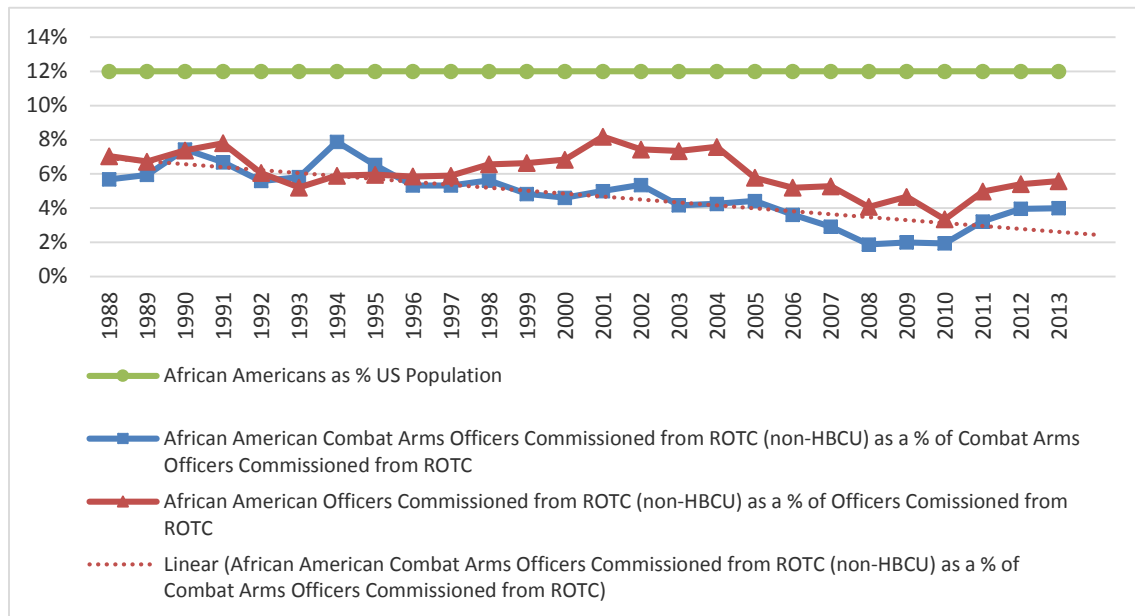


Figure 6. ROTC Comparisons non-HBCU

### ROTC Programs at Historically Black Colleges and Universities

The most concerning data of all comes from HBCUs. HBCUs are no longer producing large quantity of African American officers, and more specifically African American combat arms officers. HBCU are institutions of higher education in the United States established before 1964 with the purpose of serving African Americans. In Title III of the Higher Education Act of 1965, Congress formally defined HBCU as schools of higher learning, whose principal mission

was the education of African Americans.<sup>60</sup> HBCU were often the only institutions for higher education throughout US history that African Americans seeking a college education could attend.

Upon further review, however, the analysis discovered some startling trends as they specifically relate to HBCU. A review of Figure 7 shows that in 1988, HBCU provided sixty-one percent of the total African American officer population. In 2008, HBCU were only responsible for eleven percent of the total African American officer population. In addition, Figure 8 shows that since 1988, the number of HBCU-commissioned African Americans decreased from forty-four percent in 1988 to ten percent in 2008 before it finally increased in 2009. Most importantly, the percentage of African American officers commissioned into combat arms branches from HBCUs has steadily declined from forty-five percent in 1988 to twenty-one percent in 2013. This data provided significant support to use the year 1988 as a starting point for this monograph. However, in order to ensure thoroughness, the year 1995 was considered based on Figure 1, and Year 1991 as a “lag” period to the HBCU closing. The year 1995 was not used, as a “catalyst year” was preferred; a logical hypothesis of decreased African American combat arms officers was not explained by the military draw down by the Clinton’s Administration. The year 1991 was discarded as well, as a clear picture of the actual time between the action in 1987 and the impact on the overall populations was not provided by the data. As a result, the year 1988 provided the most logical start point for the monograph.

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<sup>60</sup> “1998 Amendments to the Higher Education Act of 1965,” US Department of Education, 12 July 2006, accessed 25 July 2014, <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/highered/leg/hea98/index.html>.

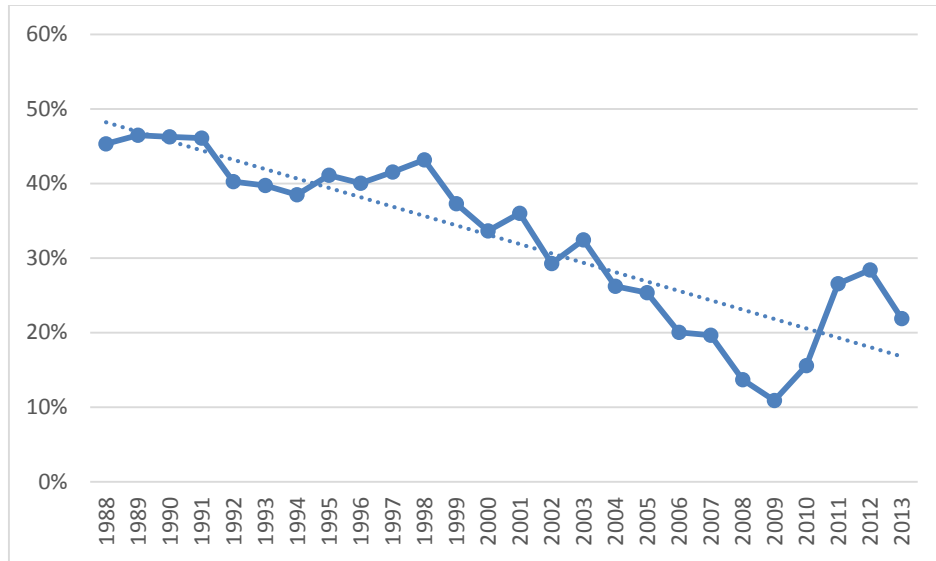


Figure 7. African American Officers Commissioned from HBCU

African American Officers commissioned from HBCUs as a percentage of total African American officers commissioned from 1988 to 2013.

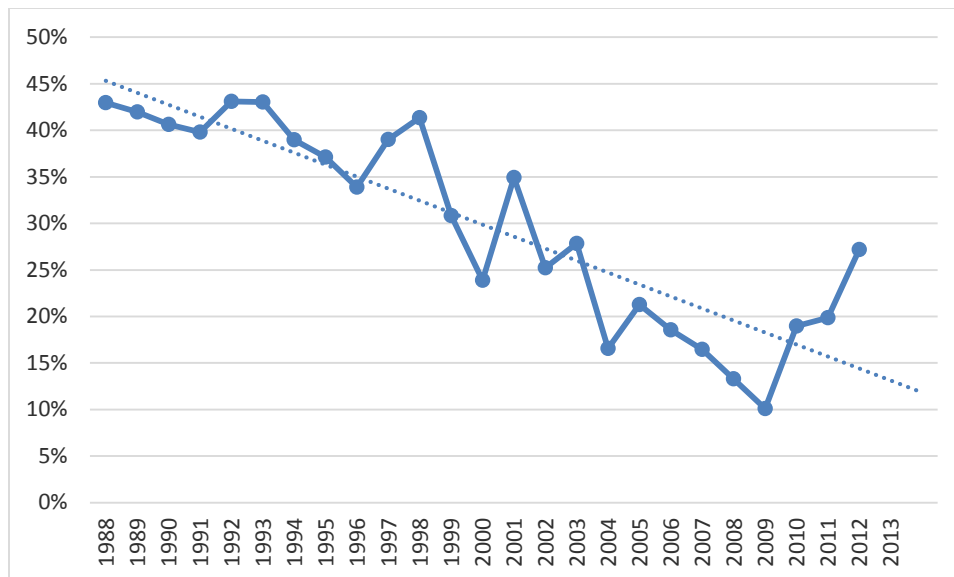


Figure 8. African American Combat Arms Officers Commissioned from HBCU

African American Combat Arms Officers Commissioned from HBCUs as a percentage of total African American Combat Arms Officers Commissioned from 1988 to 2013.

These trends suggest that HBCUs are experiencing both issues outlined in this monograph; HBCUs do not make up a large enough share of the Army's ROTC effort, and the ones they are recruiting are branching combat arms less often. These issues, along with a history of providing the majority of African American officers and African American combat arms officers, clearly makes HBCU the focal point for addressing the issue of underrepresentation of African American combat arms officers in the Army.

Given the review of the important issues of African American officer history and the statistics for the three primary commissioning sources this study will now interpret this data. This study concentrates on the year 1988 for two principle reasons. These are (1) the closure of ROTC programs in urban areas occurred in the late eighties, and is believed to be responsible for a portion of the drop in African American officers, and (2) decrease reliance on HBCUs to produce large quantities of African American officers.

### **Trends Since 1988**

The review of the data from the three commissioning sources sheds light on potential causes of for the underrepresentation of African Americans in the combat arms branches. While the total number of African American officers matches or exceeds the national average for African Americans in society, both ROTC and USMA commission a reduced percentage. This problem is not evident upon a review of African American officer statistics alone because the Army is developing the majority of its officers via OCS. This problem is supported by the fact both ROTC and West Point consistently commissioned approximately six percent below the national average while OCS commissioned approximately five percent above the national average. In addition, OCS commissioned approximately twenty-five percent of the African American officers into the Army despite being the smallest commissioning source. Unfortunately, this problem, while easier to address, may exacerbate the real problem facing the Army-African Americans are simply less likely to branch into combat arms. The decrease in African American

officers commissioning in combat arms branches through ROTC clearly illustrates this problem, especially with regards to HBCUs. Furthermore, Figure 9 shows the percentage of African Americans selecting a combat arms branch has been decreasing since 1988. The data, however, does not provide a reason why African Americans are less likely to branch into combat arms. Literature suggests a hypothesis: the large discrepancy between combat arms and support branches suggests that African Americans, especially those already in the Army, do not see combat arms branches as a legitimate career. Given that the United States achieved what some would consider the pinnacle of racial equality when it elected an African American President to two consecutive terms, yet cannot consistently produce African American four-star generals, indicates the problem is more complex than simple recruitment.

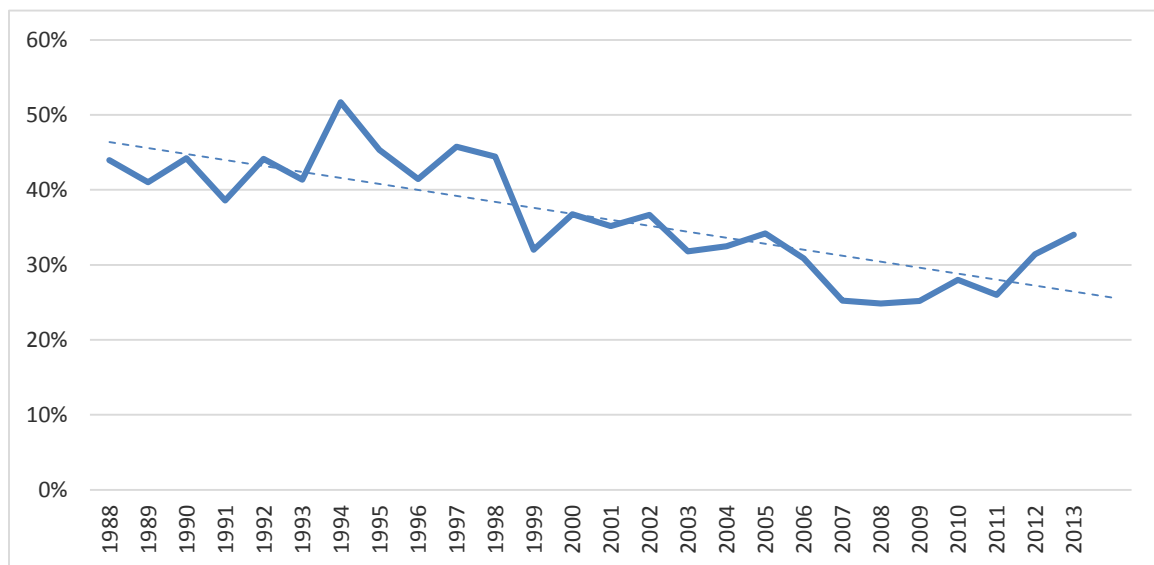


Figure 9. African American Combat Arms Officer

Total African American Combat Arms Officers Commissioned as a percentage of Total African American Officers Commissioned from 1988 to 2013.

The problem, as understood by most individuals who study the problem closely, is that African Americans do not consider the Army a means to a better life; but, instead, consider only



support branches a means to a better life. This is unquestionably different from the African American officer historical review. Given that African Americans now know the highest levels of civilian power are achievable, skills that seem marketable in the civilian sector are more important to African Americans than ever before. This is understandable behavior when men such as Henry Kissinger state that, “military men are ‘dumb, stupid animals to be used’ as pawns for foreign policy.”<sup>61</sup> If military men are considered *dumb* by politicians, they should at least have a skill to show for it. Unfortunately, the perception for African Americans is that the combat arms branches do not provide those skills, and if they decide to leave for the civilian sector, they will be seen only as *pawns*. However, understanding that changing perception takes a very long time, the mitigations to follow in this monograph will focus on the immediate issue of increasing commissioned African American combat arms officers in hopes that perception, and the courses of action for achieving it, will be more easily attainable.

### **Possible Causality**

As stated in the methodology section, the potential causes outlined below are just that – possible. The data above provides the Army with a snapshot of the current data presented in a manner not publically available elsewhere. When the data is coupled with the possible causes below, which are formulated based on history, trends found in other publically available data, and discussion with subject-matter experts, correlations are shown. Unfortunately, correlation does not equal causation and as a result, the information provided below is merely a starting point for the Army to begin investigation in an effort to determine the true causes and determine where to best allocate resources. That being said, given the high level of correlation between the potential

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<sup>61</sup> Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein, *The Final Days* (New York: Simon & Schuster Paperbacks, 1976), 194.

causes below and the data, it is certainly in the best interest of the Army to investigate them further.

#### West Point Diversity Outreach Program Ineffective

Given the statistics seen in Figure 9, the West Point Diversity Outreach Program has not been effective in recruiting African Americans at a rate equal to that of the United States population. At the time of publication, the data for percentage of African Americans who accept appointment to West Point is unavailable. However, it should be assumed that cadets, regardless of race, are seeing equal attrition rates. If the attrition rates of African American cadets are higher at a statistically significant rate, that is cause for serious concern at the highest levels of the Army about the culture of West Point. The true cause of why the program has been ineffective is both unknown and beyond the scope of this monograph. The known resources available to West Point should allow for making that determination, however, it is important to note this problem exists.

#### Disproportionate Closure of Army ROTC Programs Serving Urban Populations

Closures of urban ROTC programs are a likely factor that has contributed to the continual decrease in African Americans officers in combat arms branches. A review of Figure 6 shows that not only are ROTC programs not commissioning African American officers at a level commensurate with the United States population, but those figures have been decreasing steadily as well. The presence of ROTC programs produces officers, but also provides increased exposure and recruiting; ergo the absence of ROTC programs produces a decreased presence and recruiting on campuses as depicted in Table 2. For instance, New York City, with a population of over eight million people, has only three ROTC programs to accommodate its population. The three ROTC programs are St. John's University in Queens, Fordham University in the Bronx, and City

University of New York in Manhattan (reopened in May 2013).<sup>62</sup> The two remaining boroughs of New York City, Staten Island, and Brooklyn, with a population of over three million, do not have any ROTC programs. Potential candidates from these boroughs have to commute typically one to two hours by either car or public transportation, taking multiple buses and trains to get to an ROTC program in New York City. The time devoted to the commute in addition to a full class schedule makes for a challenging, and in some cases, discouraging situation for any potential candidates.

Location	ROTC Program Closed	African American Population	Total Population
<b>New York City</b>	John Jay College	299,213	1,626,159
	Polytechnic Institute	917,620	2,592,149
<b>New Jersey</b>	Monmouth University	47,855	629,672
	New Jersey City University	91,181	828,919
	Rider University	78,157	370,414
	St. Peter's College	99,702	660,282
<b>Philadelphia</b>	University of Pennsylvania	686,498	1,553,165
<b>Chicago</b>	Chicago State University	1,289,212	5,240,700

Table 2. ROTC Closure vs. African American Population Density within Affected Areas

*Source:* Cheryl Miller, "Underserved: A Case Study of ROTC in New York City," American Enterprise Institute, May, 2011, accessed 14 August 2014, <http://www.citizenship-aei.org/wp-content/uploads/ROTC-Final-May-2011.pdf>; US Census Bureau, <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/index.html>.

#### Decreased Reliance on HBCUs for Officers Commission through Army ROTC

In the late 1980s, HBCUs were commissioning sixty-five percent of the total African American officers in the Army with forty-two percent branching combat arms. However, the year 2000 saw numbers as low as eleven percent of officers commissioned from HBCUs with ten

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<sup>62</sup> US Army Cadet Command, accessed 19 July 2014, <http://www.cadetcommand.army.mil/>.

percent branching combat arms. The numbers in Figures 7 and 8 show a significant shift in the number of African American officers produced by HBCUs. Fewer African Americans are receiving commissions from HBCUs and fewer of those are choosing to enter combat arms. Meanwhile, a review of Figure 3 shows that OCS has mitigated some of the decreases in HBCU commissioning, but has not seen a large enough increase to prevent an underrepresentation.

### **Options for the US Army to Mitigate these Problems**

In a resource-constrained environment, the Army still has several options to make an impact and effect the number of African American combat arms officers immediately. These initial entry corrections on the officers' career pipeline have the potential to influence the number of African American officers eligible for higher command. On average, it takes over twenty-six years from receiving a commission as a Second Lieutenant from any of the commissioning sources before becoming eligible for promotion to Brigadier General.<sup>63</sup> As a result of this time and the current resourced constrained environment, the majority of the mitigations discussed will focus on making an immediate impact; increasing the pool of African American combat arms officers.

#### **Expansion of Targeted Recruiting for OCS among Civilian Applicants**

OCS is the first indicator that an officer population of approximately twelve percent is insufficient for the Army to increase the number of African American combat arms officers within its ranks, because of the existing disparity in branch preferences. A targeted recruiting expansion for OCS among civilian applicants would provide an immediate short-term mitigation. Trends from Figure 3 reveal that OCS has produced the greatest percentage of African Americans selecting combat arms in recent years, achieved in a passive manner, using a coordinated outreach

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<sup>63</sup> "Colonel Assignments," US Army Human Resources Command, accessed 11 July 2014, <https://www.hrc.army.mil/officer/col%20assignments>.

focus. OCS provides the Army the opportunity to identify, recruit, and select those African American applicants with the attributes most likely to select the combat arms. This provides the opportunity to maximize source personnel resources and conduct outreach in a forward manner to a broader audience, rather than a narrow few on a single campus. Using officers to recruit officers will assist in this manner. Therefore, OCS is a better option to select applicants who have the attributes and desire to serve in the combat arms branches. That would help reduce that disparity between the number of officers commissioned and the number selecting combat arms, thereby improving the overall situation.

#### Transition to Market-Based ROTC Prospecting Model and Re-establishment of ROTC programs on Campuses Servicing Students from Urban Areas

The most efficient way of dealing with the underrepresentation of African Americans in the combat arms branches is the re-establishment of ROTC detachments on campuses in urban areas. The downside of this mitigation, however, is there may be a significant fiscal investment required.

In New York, State University of New York (SUNY) has thirty-one percent capture rate of New York City high school seniors<sup>64</sup> and City University of New York has around fifty percent yield of New York City high school seniors. At this time, there are no ROTC programs aligned to target or engage this population. More specifically and possibly more cost effectively, previously closed ROTC programs can be reopened. A primary example is the Polytechnic Institute in Brooklyn, New York. Brooklyn currently boasts the second largest African American population in the United States at 917,620 individuals, and has the fifty-first largest percentage of

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<sup>64</sup> “2014 SUNY Fast Facts,” State University of New York, October 2014, accessed 2 November 2014, <http://www.suny.edu/media/suny/content-assets/documents/FastFacts2014.pdf>.

African Americans in the country.<sup>65</sup> Furthermore, the Polytechnic Institute is rated the second best non-HBCU for minorities in the country.<sup>66</sup> In addition, the Army could expand its current ROTC program, and consider opening new ROTC programs in large cities, specifically cities with large African American populations that have never before had ROTC programs. An example is Valdosta State. Valdosta State currently graduates the thirty-third largest African American population of any university in the country. In addition, while Valdosta is not considered a large city, as just the 645th most populated, it boasts the seventy-third largest African American population in the country and the nineteenth largest African American population percentage.

Cities such as Brooklyn and Valdosta are crucial if the Army hopes to succeed in correcting the underrepresentation of African American combat arms officers in its ranks. A focus on these cities can offer potential additional benefits for the Army. Currently, recruiting is typically campus-based only. However, a market-based approach, which allocates ROTC resources at an identified hub in a metropolitan area, allows the cadre to apply resources to an array of schools in that market. Greater reach allows for more “touches,” and in turn could increase not only enrollment in ROTC programs, but overall recruitment.

#### Increased Focus on HBCUs

As HBCU are currently seeing concerning downward trends, and given their past commissioning numbers, two proposed mitigations specific to HBCUs should be considered. For the Army, it makes sense to use the HBCU as a test bed for these mitigations as results will be seen sooner given the large African American populations. First, African American combat arms

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<sup>65</sup> US Census Bureau, <http://www.census.gov/en.html>.

<sup>66</sup> Matthew Lynch, “30 Best U.S. Non-HBCU Schools for Minorities,” *Diverse: Issues in Higher Education*, 27 May 2013, accessed 12 October 2014, <http://diverseeducation.com/article/53530/>.

officers need to be assigned to HBCU to serve as Professors of Military Science. Second, mentorship programs should be established at HBCU with a focus on combat arms branches as a career and beyond. These two mitigations can act independently, however, using the same officers for both. Implementing the mitigations simultaneously could have a drastic impact on African Americans in the Army's combat arms branches. This underscores a key issue for the Army: Excellent and above-average African American combat arms officers need to be identified and selected either with reward, but at a minimum without penalty, to serve as Professors of Military Science for HBCUs.

#### Extended Mitigation Options

As discussed, the African American representation in the overall officer population is only a half of the problem. While it seems to indicate that no problem exists, it hides that fact that African Americans are underrepresented in the flag officer ranks. Unfortunately, this issue requires significant time and resources for a noticeable change to occur given the extraordinary amount of time required to achieve that rank. As mentioned, it is hypothesized that African Americans do not perceive combat arms to be as fruitful long term as non-combat arms branches. Unfortunately, the data alone does not provide a concrete answer as to why African Americans are branch selecting combat arms less often. As a result, the Army would need to spend significant time testing this hypothesis. Second, if the Army does determine this to be the case, it takes an incredibly long time to change perception assuming it can be changed.

The potential first step is ensuring the best officers, specifically African Americans, are required to serve in Professors of Military Science roles. Generally, talented officers in the Army are steered toward an ideal career path that helps them achieve battalion and brigade commands. This path requires accepting and performing in specific key developmental areas, which serve as a foundation to Army's promotion pyramid. Unfortunately, the selection boards responsible for deciding on schools, promotion, and command positions do not see Professors of Military

Science jobs as favorable and, thus, positions at ROTC programs are not ideal for officers with aspirations of becoming commanders at battalion and brigade levels. In order for these perceptions to change, this paradigm must shift, especially for African American combat arms officers who would be spearheading such efforts. It is incredibly important to ensure top-notch, company grade, African American officers are placed in these Professors of Military Science roles as these individuals will still be young enough to relate to the college students and change perceptions. This role, though significantly impacted by company grade officers, should also include Lieutenant Colonels who oversee ROTC programs to identify potential excellent or above-average African American combat arms officers. These individuals are equally as important as they would be responsible for mentoring the current company grade officers and ensuring they continue to walk to path to battalion command and beyond. Unfortunately, not only is this not the case for African Americans, but it is not the true for any race as none of the twelve, current four-star generals served in Professors of Military Science roles.

### **Conclusions**

In 2013, Gallup conducted a poll to determine the most trusted professions in America. The results listed military officers fourth with a score of sixty-nine percent, and members of Congress as twenty-first with a score of eight percent.<sup>67</sup> The Army's 2012 Posture Statement explains that "the US Army remains the most agile, adaptable, and capable force in the world. . . . Ours is an Army that reflects America's diversity and represents the time-honored values that built our Nation."<sup>68</sup> This statement supports the Army's desire for a professional force that is a representation of America's society. However, low numbers of African American in the combat

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<sup>67</sup> "Honesty/Ethics in Professions," Gallup Public Opinion Poll, accessed 25 July 2014, <http://www.gallup.com/poll/1654/honesty-ethics-professions.aspx>.

<sup>68</sup> Department of the Army Headquarters, *Army Doctrine Publication 1, The Army* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2012), 1-1.



arms branches precludes the diversity the Army hopes for within its ranks. This underrepresentation is clearly highlighted by the low number of African American general officers and four-star general officers who act as the bridge between the military and the poorly ranked elected representatives of the US population. As Clausewitz defines war as “merely the continuation of policy by other means,”<sup>69</sup> the lack of African American general officers actually represents a lack of diplomatic influence for African Americans in the United States. This defines the importance of this issue, and highlights why the Army should take it seriously.

Fortunately, it would not be difficult for the Army to make a short-term impact on the issue. The data shows that increasing the number of ROTC programs in areas with large African American populations, such as Brooklyn, would have almost immediate effects on ROTC African American combat arms officer commissioning. Additionally, a focus on HBCU, and specifically the officers chosen to serve as Professors of Military Science for those institutions, will start the process of changing perceptions. These two actions alone should initially help boost the African American officer population, and in the long term provide a more stable platform for commissioning African American combat arms officers.

The US Military is the means for policy when diplomacy fails to produce expected results. In addition, the US Military can be employed in building foreign partnership through joint military exercises. The US National Security Strategy of 2010 calls for strong security cooperation between the United States and partner nations.<sup>70</sup> The US Army concept of Regionally

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<sup>69</sup> Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, Edited and Translated by Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1976), 87.

<sup>70</sup> “National Security Strategy 2010,” US Government, accessed 18 July 2014, [http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/rss\\_viewer/national\\_security\\_strategy.pdf](http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/rss_viewer/national_security_strategy.pdf).

Aligned Forces (RAF) is a way to meet the demands of the civilian leadership.<sup>71</sup> However, most of these unstable countries are former colonies, and seeing an external force dominated by one race can refresh old wounds. Not only can lack of diversity affect civil and military relations, it can also expand to the international stage. An Army that is homogeneous in a heterogeneous society will not have trust from society to maintain itself. The result from this is change that is not beneficial to both the Army and society.

In order for the US Army to maintain trust with the society it was employed to support and defend, it must show diversity. Unfortunately, the US Army's current position is not in line with its stated goal of reflecting diversity. At the end of the day, the Army must ask itself the following question: Do we truly want to be a representation of society or are we just paying diversity a lip service?

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<sup>71</sup> According to the US Army website, [http://www.army.mil/article/113660/Regionally\\_aligned\\_forces\\_continue\\_to\\_organize\\_despite\\_budget\\_uncertainties/](http://www.army.mil/article/113660/Regionally_aligned_forces_continue_to_organize_despite_budget_uncertainties/), regionally aligned forces (RAF) are brigades, divisions, and corps are assigned to combatant commanders from different regions of the world — US Africa Command, US European Command, US Pacific Command, US Northern Command, US Central Command, and US Southern Command. The primary goal of RAF is to prevent war by collaborating with nations within the region.

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